

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 ICAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /056 R

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ARA/CEN:WMATTHEWS
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-----072321 091918Z /40

O 091909Z SEP 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 229146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NU

SUBJECT: COSTA RICA MEDIATION INITIATIVE ON NICARAGUA

1. FOLLOWING MAY BE USED DISCREETLY AS BACKGROUND WITH
HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS: COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT CARAZO
INFORMED US SOME DAYS AGO OF HIS BELIEF THAT AN EFFORT
BY THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENTS TO ARRANGE MEDIATION
BETWEEN PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND HIS DOMESTIC OPPONENTS MIGHT
PROVIDE A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT NICARAGUAN CRISIS. WE
TOLD HIM THAT WE WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED SUCH AN INITIATIVE.
HE THEN SENT HIS FOREIGN MINISTER, CALDERON, TO MEET WITH
LEADERS OF HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, AND EL SALVADOR.

2. CARAZO AND CALDERON GAVE OUR AMBASSADOR THE RESULTS OF
THIS MISSION ON SEPTEMBER 8. CALDERON FELT HIS VISITS
HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, IN THAT THE LEADERS OF ALL THREE
NATIONS INDICATED SOME DEGREE OF ACCEPTANCE FOR THE NEED
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FOR COLLABORATION TO REACH A VIABLE SOLUTION FOR THE
NICARAGUAN CRISIS. THE HONDURAS FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE CR INITIATIVE, THOUGH THAT NATION'S
RULING JUNTA APPEARED TO HAVE NOT GIVEN THE IDEA MUCH
THOUGHT. GUATEMALA'S PRESIDENT DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF,
BUT DID AUTHORIZE HIS VICE PRESIDENT TO EXPLORE WITH COSTA

RICA THE IDEA OF A COMMISSION COMPOSED OF FORMER PRESIDENTS OF THE FOUR CA NATIONS TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH SOMOZA.

3. WE HAVE TOLD PRESIDENT SOMOZA AND OTHER HEADS OF STATE OF OUR SUPPORT FOR A CA INITIATIVE, SOMOZA WAS NOT INITIALLY FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE IDEA BUT RESERVED A FINAL OPINION UNTIL HE DETERMINED EXACTLY WHAT THE CA CONSENSUS MIGHT BE. WE HAVE INSTRUCTED OUR AMBASSADOR TO INFORM APPROPRIATE OPPOSITION LEADERS OF OUR SUPPORT FOR THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INITIATIVE AND TO SUGGEST THEY SUPPORT IT AS WELL. IN A CONVERSATION SEPTEMBER 8 IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN NICARAGUAN FOREIGN MINISTER QUINTANA AND DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, THE FONMIN STRESSED THE NEED FOR NICARAGUA'S PROBLEMS TO BE RESOLVED BY NICARAGUANS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT DISCARD THE IDEA OF TURNING TO AN OUTSIDE ELEMENT TO BRING HIS GOOD OFFICES TO BEAR IF INTERNAL PROCEDURES FAIL.

4. THE NEXT STEP IN THIS EFFORT IS AS YET UNCLEAR, BUT MAY INVOLVE THE SENDING OF "EMISSARIES" FROM THE OTHER FOUR CA COUNTRIES TO MANAGUA TO SOUND OUT SOMOZA'S RECEPTIVITY TO SOME FORMULA FOR EITHER MEDIATION OR SOME OTHER KIND OF NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. THE EMISSARIES

MIGHT MEET WITH THE FOUR FOREIGN MINISTERS LATER IN
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SEPTEMBER TO COMPARE NOTES AND DECIDE ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE (AND THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED) ARE SCEPTICAL REGARDING THE CHANCE FOR SUCCESS FROM THE COSTA RICAN INITIATIVE, WE FEEL IT SHOULD BE TRIED, AND EVEN IF IT FAILS, IT SHOULD IMPRESS SOMOZA WITH THE REAL CONCERNS HELD BY HIS NEIGHBORING STATES OVER THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN NICARAGUA AND THE NEED FOR AN EARLY SOLUTION INVOLVING REAL COMPROMISES.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARBITRATION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE229146
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DKNIGHT:MMS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780368-0191
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780984/aaaacrcl.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5f727053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1491450
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COSTA RICA MEDIATION INITIATIVE ON NICARAGUA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PINS, CS, GT, HO, ES, NU
To: ARA POSTS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcl://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5f727053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014